

ADVISORY NOTICE AND UPDATE ON NAUSET ESTUARY DREDGING PROJECT AUGUST 10, 2021

Orleans and Eastham town officials are grateful to members of the public who submitted comments on the draft Expanded Environmental Notification Form (EENF) for the Nauset Estuary dredging project at the public meetings on June 22 and June 29. Many of the comments submitted were informative and helpful. Town officials recognize that development of the best dredging plan for Nauset Estuary is a complex challenge and the plan should be revised as more information becomes available.

The most important outcome of the public meetings has been the determination that the Towns should not use the proposed 7 acre dewatering basin north of the Nauset Beach parking lot for any dredging related activities. This determination means that dredge spoils from the dredging of the Priscilla Landing spur and Mill Pond channel spur will not be sent by pipe across the land below Nauset Heights and they will not be delivered to the dewatering basin by other means. The proposed dewatering basin area will not be disturbed in any other respect in connection with the dredging project. Further, Callanan's Pass will not be used for any dredging related activities.

Woods Hole Group (WHG), consultant to the Town of Orleans, is now developing alternatives for the dredging of the Priscilla and Mill Pond channel spurs. These alternatives will be considered by the Nauset Estuary Stakeholder Group (NESG) at a meeting in late August or early September. After the NESG makes its recommendations for the dredging of the two spur channels, the EENF will be revised and submitted to the NESG for discussion. Thereafter, the revised EENF will be submitted to the Orleans and Eastham Select Boards for approval. A joint meeting of the two Select Boards will be scheduled to discuss the revised EENF.

While the spur channel dredging alternatives are being considered, WHG is simultaneously making other revisions to the draft EENF in response to the public meeting comments and other information that has been gathered since the draft EENF was published. WHG will include in the revised EENF a compilation of all the comments and questions received on the initial EENF draft, and the responses provided. WHG is also preparing an updated cost estimate for the dredging project and an updated timetable for the various elements of the dredging project. This updated information also will be incorporated into the revised EENF.

In a related development, the Town of Orleans has named Nate Sears, the Town's Natural Resources Manager, as the point person for the Town's work on the Nauset Estuary dredging project. In this role, Nate will serve as WHG's primary contact and he will interface with Eastham town officials on dredging matters. In addition, Nate will be the appropriate person to receive questions and comments from Orleans residents on dredging related issues. John Kelly, Town Administrator, and Tom Daley, DPW Director, will support Nate in this role. Orleans resident Charlie Carlson, Chairman of the NESG, will continue in this role to coordinate the work of that committee.